

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are active in the application.

In order to more clearly set forth the distinguishing features of the present invention, claims 1, 8, and 11 have been amended to clarify that the timing measurement is a measurement of a propagation delay time of an electronic circuit. The propagation delay time can be, for example, the access time in a memory circuit (see page 1, lines 10-19, and page 7, lines 13-15). The amendments to claims 1, 8, and 11 are merely clarifying and do not substantially change the scope of the claims.

Claims 1-4, 8, and 11-13 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by US patent 6,714,021 to Williams. These rejections are traversed by the declaration of John Fifield under 37 CFR 1.131, which was filed in this case on July 14, 2004. The declaration was not specifically addressed in the last office action, and it is requested that the declaration be considered as it effectively removes the Williams reference from consideration. The declaration demonstrates conception and reduction to practice of the present invention prior to January 11, 2001, the 102(e) date of the Williams reference. Accordingly, the rejections of claim 1-4, 8, and 11-13 must be withdrawn. Furthermore, in the previous amendment, in the penultimate paragraph on page 8, the undersigned noted that the declaration demonstrated prior invention by the Applicant.

Claims 1 and 11-12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by US patent 6,161,420 to Dilger et al. These rejections are traversed.

Dilger et al. teach a vernier method (see col. 6, lines 58-62) for accurately determining the resonant frequency of a quartz crystal microbalance (QCM). The circuit of Dilger et al. creates a coarse frequency measurement with a digital frequency synthesizer 120, and creates a fine frequency measurement by comparing a reference signal 122 (produced by the synthesizer 120) with the QCM signal. Dilger et al. employs a vernier technique in that the reference signal is slightly slowed compared to the original QCM signal. It is important to note that Dilger et al. is exclusively a frequency measurement technique. Dilger et al. is limited to measuring only frequency because the QCM 40 is exclusively a frequency-based device. Additionally, the digital mixer 106 and

frequency synthesizer 120 can only be used with frequency measurement. Dilger et al. do not teach or suggest the measurement of a time interval or propagation time.

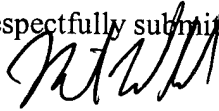
By comparison, the present invention is exclusively directed toward a timing measurement. Specifically, the present invention is directed towards an apparatus and method for measuring the time required for an electronic circuit (e.g. a memory circuit) to respond to a query signal (such as a memory access request). Dilger et al. does not teach or suggest a timing measurement or the measurement of any time interval. Dilger et al. does not teach or suggest the measurement of a propagation delay time. Accordingly, Dilger et al. does not meet the limitations of claims 1 or 11 and the rejections of these claims must therefore be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1-15 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees for the petition or for entry of this amendment to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2041 (Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson P.C.).

Respectfully submitted,



Michael E. Whitham
Reg. No. 32,635

Whitham, Curtis, & Christofferson, P.C.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, VA, 20190
Phone: 703-787-9400
Fax: 703-787-7557